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SERMON

DELIVERED BEFORE

HIS EXCELLENCY GEORGE N. BRIGGS,

GOVERNOR,

HIS HONOR JOHN REED,

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR,

THE HONORABLE COUNCIL,

AND

THE LEGISLATURE OF MASSACHUSETTS,

AT

THE ANNUAL ELECTION,

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 6, 1847.

BY JOHN H. BISBEE,

Pastor of the Church in Worthington.

Boston:

DUTTON AND WENTWORTH, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.

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1847.

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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

IN SENATE, *January 7, 1847.*

Ordered, That Messrs. Shepard, Rising and Perkins, be a committee to present the thanks of the Senate to the Rev. JOHN H. BISBEE, for the Discourse delivered by him yesterday, before the Government of the Commonwealth, and to request a copy thereof for publication.

CHARLES CALHOUN, *Clerk.*

S E R M O N .

II Samuel, xxiii. 3.

THE GOD OF ISRAEL SAID, THE ROCK OF ISRAEL SPAKE TO ME,
HE THAT RULETH OVER MEN MUST BE JUST, RULING IN THE
FEAR OF GOD.

“THE most essential quality in any government,” says a distinguished writer, “is justice.” This is unquestionably true. It may be safe, therefore, to affirm, that any government is good, and accomplishes the object for which it is properly instituted, in proportion as the principles of justice are inviolably maintained.

The only perfect government, of which we have any knowledge, is characterized by the never-failing administration of justice, at the head of which, as Supreme Lawgiver, Governor, and Judge, is a “just God.” Human governments approach perfection, in proportion as they embrace those excellencies which constitute the Divine.

It is a principle, asserted by our fathers, and maintained by us, as fundamental, that "government is instituted for the common good ; for the protection, safety, and happiness of the people," which is virtually but another form of expression to denote the maintenance of justice in the most comprehensive sense of that term. It is designed to secure to all, the undisturbed possession and peaceable enjoyment of their "natural, essential and unalienable rights."

God has wisely instituted civil society, and ordained human government. "There is no power but of God." "The powers that be are ordained of God." This truth, though often perverted by the despotic, and made to defend tyranny and oppression, is still none the less important, and surely not less worthy to be defended.

As King of kings and Lord of lords, God has described the character which rulers should sustain, and has specified the great and leading principles in accordance with which all their official acts should be performed.

"The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." This, though spoken centuries ago, is as true now as then, and as important to be regarded. It is the assertion of a claim which God

has upon those who stand at the head of human government as an "ordinance of God."

The text implies that rulers, in the discharge of their official duties, may have difficulties to encounter, and obstacles to overcome. And there are, it may safely be presumed, always in existence, causes more or less powerful which, in their operation, tend to prevent justice, disturb the order, and mar the harmony of society, and thus to defeat "the end of the institution, maintenance and administration of government." These, however, are not always precisely the same, but vary according to time, place, and circumstances. Each generation is characterized by its own peculiarities, and has its own prominent, well-defined features. Each, it may be, has its peculiar virtues, and, perchance, its distinguishing errors. No two generations, more than any two individuals, are, in all respects, precisely alike. Though in many things there may be a striking resemblance, yet in many other important respects, there is an equally manifest diversity.

It may be appropriate to the present time and occasion, therefore, to contemplate some of those causes which now exist, and inquire what is necessary in order either to remove them, or so to meet and counteract their effect, as to protect society

with all its interests, and guard the rights of all classes of individuals.

I do not say that the sentiments and practices of the present age are worse than those of any preceding. Nor do I affirm that they are better. It is neither sound philosophy, nor evidence of comprehensive views, nor an indication of greatness of intellect, nor of superior wisdom, either to maintain or discard a sentiment or practice because it is ancient, or, on the other hand, to receive or reject one because it is new. Many ancient opinions and customs are undoubtedly wrong ; and many, which are new, are unquestionably far from being improvements. I can have little or no sympathy with the sentiments of those, on the one hand, who, regarding every change in society as an unauthorized innovation, and as tending to the utter ruin of every thing valuable in our free institutions, would fain fetter the world in its onward progress, or at least chain it where it is, if they could not bring it back to some fancied golden period past ; nor with the radicalism of those, on the other hand, who imagine that they have discovered the unsoundness of every existing foundation, and that every thing resting thereon is baseless, and who would hence recklessly destroy every existing institution, with the visionary hope

that something better might spring from their ruins.

“Prove all things,” is a dictate of enlightened reason, as well as a precept of Scripture. And it is equally the duty of all, to “hold fast that which is good,” and that alone.

Among the causes now existing tending to obstruct justice, disturb the order of society, and lessen the restraints of law, may be named erroneous theories respecting the nature and powers of government, and of human rights.

Sentiments the most Utopian are boldly advanced, which, if not new, are at least claimed as such by their advocates, and which, if reduced to practice, might startle and alarm even their defenders, who, it is manifest, have taken but a superficial view of human nature and the institutions of society.

I hardly need pause here to mention, as of this description, that visionary theory, which is avowedly at war with all human government, thus laying the axe at the root of the tree under which all the nations of the earth have hitherto taken shelter.

It needs no peculiar discernment to perceive the tendency of such a doctrine, to weaken the arm of the civil law, loosen the bonds of society, and pro-

mote a spirit of insubordination. Such a theory, if to sufficient extent embraced, and reduced to practice, must of necessity undermine the foundations of civil society, and throw the whole social and political fabric into chaos. It would "drive the ploughshare of destruction" over every existing institution, and whelm, in indiscriminate ruin, all our blessings. Universal anarchy would be the result, than which the most grinding despotism could not be worse. No argument is needed to show the truth of these remarks. But leaving this, there are other theories which, while they admit the necessity of human government, still contain so much that is erroneous respecting its nature, and the extent of its powers, and the rights of individuals, as to make their influence adverse to the best interests of society, and to the attainment of the grand object of the institution of government. These, though more plausible, indeed, than the one already named, may be on that account the more baneful, because more liable to deceive the credulous and unsuspecting. Error is often dangerous in direct proportion to the amount of truth with which it is mingled.

Instead of naming these singly, I will barely allude to two as specimens. The one is the principle of "non-resistance," so zealously advocated by some,

which, if adopted, would leave our citizens and their property to the merciless rapacity of marauders and mobs. This would prostrate every barrier to the commission of crime, and beckon the vile to their work of pollution, plunder and bloodshed. It would leave the virtuous a prey to the tiger-like ferocity of the unprincipled and abandoned.

The other, to which I will allude, is the sentiment so often and boldly advanced, that the magistrate, as an officer of government, is clothed with no authority to do what he would not have an equal moral right to do as a private individual. If this be true, then is the magistrate no longer "the minister of God," "a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." It cannot be said of him, "he beareth not the sword in vain."

This principle, carried out to its legitimate result, would destroy all government, and leave every man to redress his own wrongs as best he could. All law would be powerless. Personal retaliation would be the common practice.

There is unquestionably at the present day, whether resulting from erroneous theories of human government, or from some other cause, a powerful tendency to lower down the majesty of law, and lessen its salutary restraints. Its requirements and

prohibitions command not that respect to which they are entitled, and its penalties awaken not that dread which they ought. Law carries not with it that "terror to evil doers" which it should.

This is too manifest to escape the notice of the most careless observer. It is seen in the various methods which human ingenuity has devised, either secretly to evade, or openly to trample on, laws the most wise and salutary. It is heard in the roar of popular tumult, heaving and swelling against government, like the waves of the ocean dashing against the shore in a tempest. On the one hand, in the heat of popular excitement, the agitated mass would seize and incarcerate, and even take the life of one suspected of crime, without law and against law. On the other hand, it would recklessly tear from the officers of justice, if not from the walls of the prison, the vilest felon, and let him loose to repeat his crimes against an innocent and virtuous community.

This is sometimes, and justly, too, called an age of excitement. In the physical and moral world, every thing moves quick. Commerce is carried on, and men are transported from place to place, by the power of steam. Thought is transmitted to distant places with the speed of the lightning's flash, so that

different parts of the country hold converse, as man with man, face to face. All these things minister to human excitability. The feelings of men are easily awakened, and their passions and prejudices without difficulty aroused. In the mass, they move by impulses, unmindful of personal responsibility. Such are the facilities for the communication of thought, that public opinion is easily influenced. And, in a popular government, this is, and necessarily must be, all-powerful. It is as irresistible as the cataract. Every thing gives way before it. Wisely guided and judiciously controlled, it accomplishes the noblest and best results. Uncontrolled or misguided, it leads to wreck and ruin. The aspiring and ambitious, actuated by the love of popular favor, are too often ready to spread their sails to the popular breeze, from whatever quarter it may blow, and to sail to whatever haven it may waft them.

How much the restraints of law are lessened, and the arm of civil government weakened, and how many obstacles are thrown in the way of the maintenance of justice, by mistaken notions of philanthropy, extensively prevalent, it is difficult to say. They who mean well, often, through prejudice, or limited and partial views of things, greatly misjudge.

Hence, the result of efforts, well intended, is often widely different from what was, at the commencement, designed.

This is sometimes, and justly, too, called a philanthropic age. Grand schemes of benevolence are planned and promptly executed. The wants and woes of humanity arrest the attention, and enlist the feelings of the benevolent, and prompt to noble deeds. The wisdom of the wise is employed to devise ways and means to meliorate the condition of man, and raise him, from the low and the sensual, to his true and proper dignity, as a rational, accountable and immortal being; to transform him from a child of misery to an heir of happiness forever. In proof of this, I need only point to the numerous charitable associations which adorn the present age, and to those asylums reared by the hand of philanthropy, where the blind are made to see, the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak; where the widow's aching heart is eased and the orphan's tears are wiped away, and where the raving lunatic is quieted, and "sits clothed and in his right mind." Laws are enacted for the promotion of virtue, and the suppression of immorality, and the removal of such causes as minister to vice and crime. Benevolent and commendable efforts are made to benefit and reform the crimi-

nal, and restore him to virtue, respectability and usefulness. In all these things, and many more of a similar character which might be named, the statesman, the patriot, the philanthropist and the Christian, will and must rejoice.

But still, admitting all this, it surely cannot, I think, be denied, that there is also a mistaken, or false philanthropy, more or less extensively prevalent. Though prompted, it may be, to some extent, by kindness and good will, it is still, on that account, none the less pernicious in its practical operation. Its tendency is none the less at war with law and destructive of order.

For an illustration of this point, I will barely allude to that professed philanthropy, which awakens more intense anxiety in behalf of the criminal, who ought, in justice, to receive the infliction of some severe penalty, than for the maintenance of law and order, and which prompts to greater exertion for his acquittal, than for the protection of an innocent and injured community.

Whatever may be its origin, that is manifestly not true philanthropy, which would arrest justice in its course, and, instead of inflicting the full measure of the penalty of a wise and wholesome law upon the guilty violator of it, would let loose the criminal to

prey, like the tiger, upon a virtuous and peaceable society. It is a dictate of benevolence, that the guilty "shall not be unpunished." Those various arguments sometimes used, and expedients resorted to, and those influences in opposition to this, whether brought to bear upon the courts of justice, or upon public sentiment, though under cover of the plea of philanthropy, are evidently not in accordance with correct views of truth and duty.

That sentiment, or spirit, under whatever name, or with whatever plea, which, in its legitimate influence, tends to weaken the power of law, lessen the dread of its penalty, and lead to its violation, with the hope of escape from justice, is adverse to the end of government, and cannot be truly philanthropic.

True philanthropy will awaken feelings of the highest respect and most profound reverence for law. It will prompt its possessor to acknowledge "the powers that be" as "ordained of God," and that "whoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God;" and will lead him to be himself "subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake." It will stimulate to the greatest exertion for the maintenance of the power and supremacy of law, and will lead to a cheerful assent to its execution, though its penalty fall on kindred or friends. It

will inspire a love of law and order, superior to the movings of pity, and stronger than the bonds of natural affection.

And need I mention, as adverse to the best interests of society, such theories of social organization, as would ruthlessly sever all the existing family relations, and sweep away, at a single stroke, the domestic circle, — that source of all that is pure and lovely, the nursery of all that is soft, and tender, and refined, the strong citadel of virtue, the seat of happiness, — ordained such by God, and would substitute in the place thereof something of human invention, more congenial to the baser passions of man, which might open wide the door to unbridled licentiousness. Man shows but folly instead of wisdom, when he would substitute, in the place of a Divine institution, one of human invention. “Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

In this connection, may it not be proper to speak of the undue excitement of political party spirit, as dangerous in its influence? The extent to which this has raged, for a few years past, is well known to all, and need not now be stated.

It is, indeed, not to be expected, that all men will think alike in relation to the policy to be adopted by government. Men, equally upright and honest in their intentions, may differ widely in their judgment. Even when reasoning from the same premises, they may arrive at different conclusions. Difference of opinion will give rise to parties.

So far, is nothing necessarily wrong. Yet liable as men are to be blinded by prejudice, and swayed by passion, and influenced by self-interest, there is danger, that, in the defence of conflicting opinions, unhallowed feelings will be aroused, and the excitement of party spirit be raised so high, and the struggle for party ascendancy become so severe, that the great and leading interests of the Commonwealth will be regarded as of minor importance. Should this ever be the case, it is easy to see that justice would no longer be impartially maintained, and government administered for the good of the people.

If the time shall ever arrive, when our government shall fall into the hands of such as prefer the interests of party to those of the State, the glory of Massachusetts will have departed. Dark will be the day, when our rulers, in their zeal for party, shall forget that they rule the whole people. Yet so high has this excitement sometimes raged, and such have

been the means used to fan the flame, and accomplish party purposes, that the sober, reflecting moralist and patriot, have not been without their fears as to its ultimate effect upon the future well-being of our free institutions.

It is not the free, fair, manly discussion of the comparative merits of political men and measures, which is objected to. This is the right and the privilege, and may be the duty, of freemen. Any restraint upon this, would be repugnant to the nature of our free institutions, and an encroachment upon our republican birthright. It is what, as men, free-born, we could not and ought not to submit to. Liberty of speech and of the press is an essential part of our republicanism; and when we part with this, our foundation will be removed. Sooner let our limbs be manacled, and our necks wear the galling yoke of slavery, than our minds be fettered, or our tongues and our pens unduly restrained. I plead not, of course, for the licentious abuse of either. But in the marshaling of political parties, and in the mighty struggle of party warfare, it surely will not be pretended that all the discussions are of the character which has been named. I speak, of course, with reference to no one party, in distinction from others.

If truth be the object sought, if the good of the Commonwealth be aimed at, free, open, and manly discussion will be of great service. Truth does not need the aid of less worthy weapons. It is best gained and best defended by weapons like itself. It appears fairest when clearest seen, and stands firmest when resting on its own merits.

Such being the nature of causes, now in operation, tending to unsettle the minds of men, and destroy confidence in long-established institutions, and thus to loosen the bonds of society, the question naturally arises, how shall they be removed, or their effect be most successfully met and counteracted? Or what is at present, in view of these things, demanded of the rulers and subjects of this Commonwealth?

I hardly need say, as first in importance, what it may safely be presumed no one will question, that our rulers "must be just, ruling in the fear of God." We must continue to have, as we heretofore have had, in the executive chair, and in the halls of legislation, and on the bench, men of clear heads and pure hearts; men of comprehensive views and discriminating minds; men of firmness and decision, and, above all, of irreproachable moral and religious character. We must have such men occupying these

various elevated stations, as can stand up in the conscious integrity of their souls, and in the true dignity of men, can do right in the face of opposition, and can fearlessly maintain justice, even though difficulties and dangers surround them. We must have men who are neither afraid nor ashamed to acknowledge Jehovah as their God, and, sensible of their own weakness, are willing to seek His aid and protection. It is our glory and our boast, that hitherto we have had such men, and it is confidently believed that we now have such men, in all these important and responsible stations. God in mercy grant that we always may have such. "Whatever the world may opine," says Erasmus, "he who hath not thought much on God, the human mind, and the summum bonum, may probably make a thriving earthworm, but will most indubitably make a blundering patriot, and a sorry statesman."

But rulers, though just and ruling in the fear of God, cannot successfully protect society and defend the rights of individuals, so that justice shall be impartially maintained, unless sustained by the strong current of public opinion. They must be aided by the popular will, or their arm is powerless. However wise they may be in the enactment of laws, however impartial they may aim to be in the execu-

tion of those laws, unless sustained by a correct public sentiment, they are like Sampson shorn of his locks. It is of vast importance, therefore, to society and its interests, that public sentiment be correct, in relation to the nature of our government, the extent of the power of rulers and the duties of citizens, that power be not abused on the one hand, nor government despised on the other, and that obedience to magistrates and subjection to law, may be yielded as a matter of conscience, when no moral principle is violated thereby.

It may, indeed, seem trite to speak, on this occasion, of universal education as important in the formation of correct public sentiment, and as essential to the order and harmony of society, and the successful administration of a popular government. And yet, though trite, such is the importance of this subject, that it should be kept constantly before the minds of the community.

Liberal provision is indeed made, by this Commonwealth, for the education of all its children and youth. This is noble and patriotic. It does honor to the memory of the departed, who established our common school system, and to the memory of their successors who have perpetuated it, and handed it

down to us. With such ample provision, so freely made, education should be universal. Every individual should early be brought under its elevating and ennobling influence. And it should not only be universal, but correct also. Universal and correct education is a more safe defender and protector of republican institutions, than armies and arsenals, with all their implements of death. It is that, without which, we cannot feel safe now, nor indulge in confident anticipations for the future. And has not the State a right to demand this, as necessary to its own preservation and prosperity? Individuals come into society not by popular vote. They are born into it. Society must receive them to its bosom, willing or unwilling. It cannot shut out from itself the ignorant, and degraded, and vicious, until by crime they have forfeited their right to liberty. As a matter of right, therefore, in justice to itself, as a means of self-protection, may not society demand that all its children and youth be so educated as to qualify them to become good citizens, and wholesome members of society, rather than that they be left to be nurtured in ignorance and vice, until they be prepared to go forth, like beasts of prey, to destroy every thing that is valuable in community. Should they not be taught to be angels of mercy

here, rather than fiends in human shape, and be trained for a crown of glory hereafter, rather than for the doom of fallen spirits ?

What is needed is not intellectual expansion and elevation merely, but, with this, corresponding moral and religious culture. Less than this should not be called education. Whatever may be an individual's mental endowments, without moral and religious training, he is less than half educated. His power may indeed be greatly increased, but that which alone gives security that it shall be applied to the promotion of great and noble objects, rather than the commission of deeds of darkness, is wanting. When I speak of the importance, to the State, of moral and religious education, I wish to be understood to plead for the morality and the religion of the Bible.

It is a noble sentiment, recently proclaimed to the world by a distinguished individual* of this city, as the motto for this country, "Universal education, founded upon morals drawn from the Bible."

This sentiment does honor to the head and the heart of him who uttered it. It is unquestionably a better remedy for the evils of our political and social system, than all the nostrums of all the quack re-

* Hon. Abbott Lawrence.

formers of the age. Let this be the motto of every individual of our country ; let it be inscribed, in imperishable letters, upon the door-posts of every temple of learning, and let it be carried out in practice, and our country, with all its valuable institutions, is safe.

I speak with the greater freedom in behalf of moral and religious education, based on the Bible, because this is a Christian State. Our gathering in this house to-day is an acknowledgment of this. From the origin of this Commonwealth to the present time, Christianity has been its acknowledged religion. Its foundation was laid in the fear of God, and its superstructure was reared under the benign influence of the Bible. Christianity enters into the framework of our excellent constitution, and gives force to our laws. It is the basis of our morality, and the sustainer of our virtue. It is the parent of our schools, academies and colleges, the source whence our education and intelligence have sprung. It is the pledge of all we hope for in future, for surely a government like ours, can be perpetuated only by the virtue and intelligence of the people, and these can be maintained only on the basis of Christianity. It is, hence, indispensably necessary to the perpetuity and prosperity of our free institutions;

that our population be morally and religiously educated.

Religion should be regarded as the most essential element in education, and should hold its due prominence in every institution of learning. The sublime truths of Christianity should be clearly taught, its doctrines explained, and its precepts urged. A religious atmosphere should surround every temple dedicated to science and literature, from the district school-house up to our colleges. I plead not, indeed, for the limited religious creed of a single sect. In the present state of things, it would be exceedingly unjust somewhere, if not utterly impracticable, to adopt such a course of instruction in our public institutions of learning, if desired. But I plead for religion, in its broad, catholic spirit, as taught and illustrated by its Divine Author. Let blind bigotry and narrow-minded sectarianism, be expelled alike from all our institutions of learning held in common, and be buried in the grave of oblivion. But let religious truth, as presented in the Bible, be brought to bear, with mighty power, upon the heart and the conscience of every individual.

It is not the presentation of abstract truth merely, cold and lifeless, that is called for, but truth exhibited in its practical bearings, as applicable to man,

linked by ten thousand ties to his fellow man, and as a creature of God, to whom he is accountable for all his conduct ; truth which shall bear with salutary effect upon the practice, in all the various walks of life, and in all the intercourse of man with man.

The prevalence of moral and religious principle alone, can give assurance that the order and harmony of society will be preserved, and that law and justice will be maintained. The Bible is the best book ever yet published on republicanism. It inculcates the true principles of human freedom. It teaches liberty without licentiousness, describes accurately the appropriate sphere of rulers, clothes them with ample authority for the accomplishment of the best good of society, and points out clearly the duties of subjects, teaching them to be obedient "for conscience' sake," and to "render to Cæsar the things that be Cæsar's." In fine, it presents the nature of civil society and the rights of individuals in their true light.

It was from this our fathers caught the spirit of freedom. By it they were guided in laying deep and broad the foundation of this Commonwealth, and in rearing so majestic a structure. And by this, their descendants must be guided, if they will preserve, and enjoy, and transmit unimpaired, to others,

the rich legacy bequeathed to them by a pious ancestry. Moral and religious principle need be more prominent and universal. It should control men in all the relative duties of life, not less than in their duty to God. It should govern in commerce, in politics, in every thing. Let the community generally be thus controlled, and we shall continue to have rulers that are "just, ruling in the fear of God," and laws that are wise and equitable, and people that will respect and obey law, and "lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty." Magistrates will be honored as "ministers of God" "for good," and be fully sustained in the faithful discharge of their official duties, and the guilty violators of law, if such there should still chance to be, can have little hope of escape from its penalty. What we most need, to secure effectually the ends of government, is the fear of God, deep, all-pervading, reaching all classes in society, influencing them in all their various employments, animating and guiding them. And how can this be more successfully gained than by instilling into the minds of children and youth, in the forming period of character, correct moral and religious principle. There is nothing like this to qualify men for usefulness, and to act well and manfully their part, in whatever station in life they may be placed. It

gives boldness in the hour of danger, firmness in the time of trial, and perseverance when difficulties cluster thick around the path. It was this which made Daniel what he was as prime minister at a heathen court, and that sustained the immortal Washington in achieving the independence of his country. It was this which animated the Puritans in this unbroken wilderness and inhospitable climate, and which gave undaunted courage and firmness to those who, appealing to Heaven for the justice of their cause, determined "to die or be free."

And will it be thought invidious if, in passing, a few remarks should be made with particular reference to the press. A sufficient apology, if any is needed, for introducing this topic, may be found in the prominent position which this mighty engine holds in society, and the powerful influence which it exerts in the formation of public sentiment, and the character and taste of individuals and of society. The press speaks, trumpet-tongued, to listening states and nations. It addresses every family in the domestic circle, and speaks to every individual in his solitary musings. Is it not, then, of the first importance to the welfare of society, that this be under a healthful moral and religious influence? Should not

all its effusions be chaste in style, correct in sentiment, elevating in thought, and pure in morals? Should not every periodical sheet, as well as every volume, nurture and sustain virtue, rather than pander to vice? Is there not a manifest inconsistency, when that which is so beneficial to society, which is so necessary for the dissemination of truth, and so powerfully instrumental in sending forth the Gospel to reform and save the benighted nations, is prostituted to the low and vile work of publishing to the world, that which is adapted to lure mankind to pollution, crime and death? "Doth a fountain send forth, at the same place, sweet water and bitter?" "No fountain can yield both salt water and fresh."

Let no one infer, from the tenor of the preceding remarks, that I am pleading for what is commonly called a "union of church and state." I ask for no such thing. All the experience of the past has proved that an unhallowed wedlock. By such a union the form of religion may indeed be more distinctly visible, but its power and vitality are always lessened. Though the imputation is sometimes cast upon the clergy, that they would consummate such a union, yet, in my opinion, no profession, or class of men, would sooner or more loudly remonstrate. But though this is not to be desired, it is still most de-

voutly to be wished, that the morality and the religion of the Bible may pervade the whole State. Men, as members of society, and as creatures of God, should feel that they are made to be moral and religious, and that the welfare of the State, and their own individual well being, both here and hereafter, depend upon this.

Another thought may appropriately be presented here. Men acting in the mass, both in public and private life, too often appear to forget their individuality, and lose sight of their personal accountability. By making a division of responsibility, they do what they would not venture to perform, if alone responsible. The most effectual safeguard, in this matter, is the fear of God, or firmly established moral and religious principle. This will lead them to ask what is right, to consult the Divine will, and look to Him for aid, from whom cometh wisdom, and "every good and perfect gift," under the abiding conviction that to Him every "one must give account for himself."

The importance of morality and religion to the welfare of the State, appears greatly increased by the consideration that none live to themselves alone, however much this may be their aim. Every individual is connected with other individuals around

him, and by them with the whole human family. He cannot act his part, therefore, and not affect others. In like manner, each generation of men is linked to preceding and succeeding generations. The character and the deeds of one, powerfully affect those which succeed it. Each generation leaves the impress of itself upon the next, and through that upon others, and thus an influence is sent onward into the future, which, if not counteracted, may go on increasing to the end of time. What a mighty influence from past generations is now felt! The patriots and statesmen, the poets and orators, and above all, the Christians of former days, have sent down a powerful influence upon us. Take the generations of this Commonwealth, which have passed away, and who can calculate the extent of their influence, or predict the time when it shall cease to be felt. Like them, we, who are now in active life, shall send an influence far into the future. It may go on increasing like the river in its course to the ocean. Millions may feel it, and, gathering the rich harvest of our well directed labors, may rise up and call us blessed, or, reaping the bitter fruits of our misdoings, may heap curses on our memory. With this view, every transaction, however trivial or unimportant in itself, assumes an immense magnitude.

The momentary act may be followed by consequences as lasting as time, if not as durable as eternity.

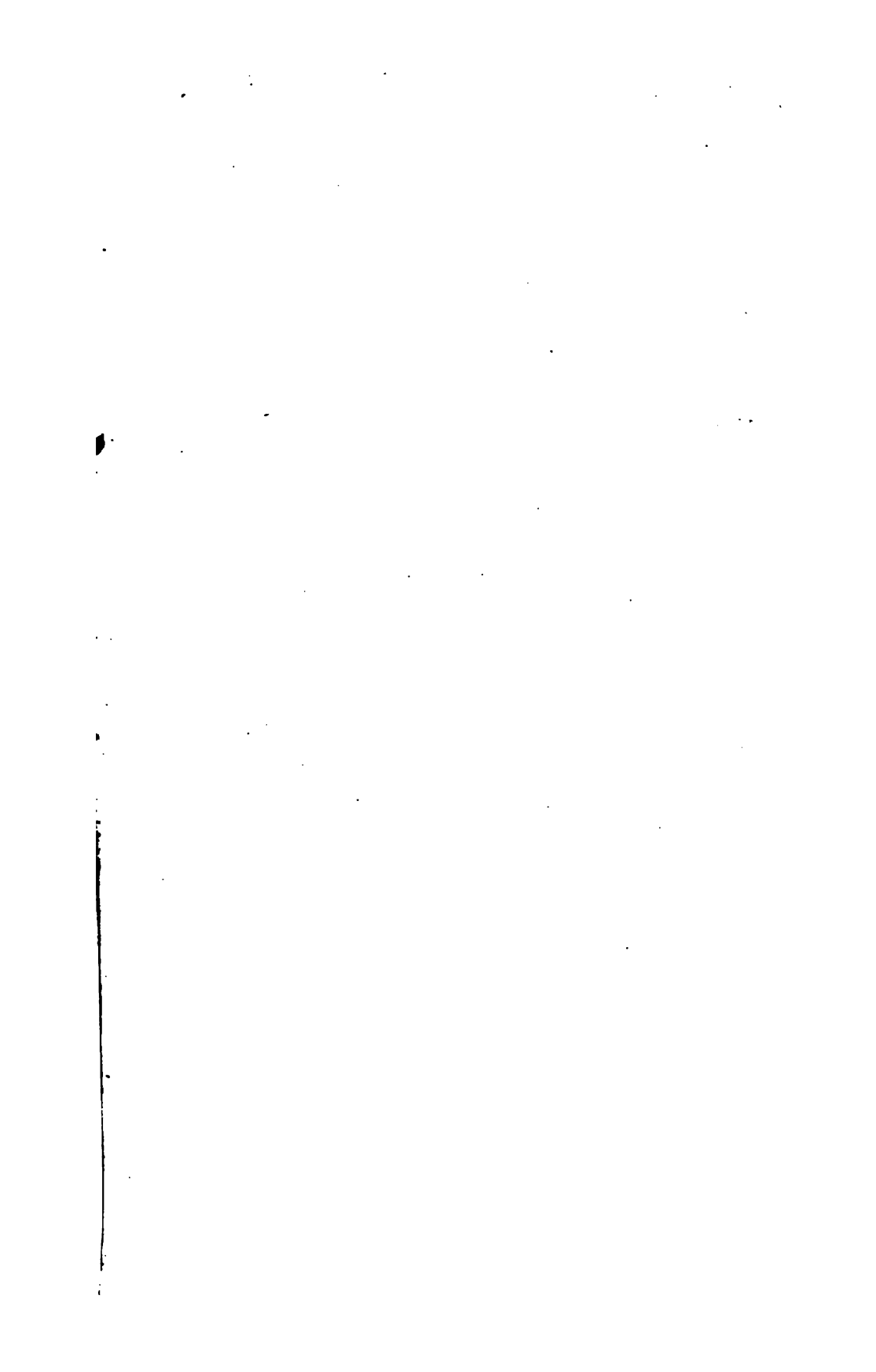
Men die, while institutions live. The experience of the past unites with the declarations of Scripture, in teaching us that we shall all soon pass away. Our names, perchance, will be forgotten, or as little regarded as the dust to which our bodies will have returned. But, as our institutions live, so, through them, will our influence be felt by those who shall succeed us. Be it ours, then, to act a manly and a Christian part; so to move, in whatever sphere God may place us, as to leave behind us a salutary influence. As we revere the memory of our pious ancestors, and value the rich legacy which they have left us, so let us imitate their virtues, and discharge our duty, that, by the blessing of God, we may transmit, unimpaired, to others, our free institutions. Let us put forth an influence which shall tend to the universal emancipation of man from the galling yoke of slavery; of mind, from the fetters of ignorance and superstition; and of hearts, from the bondage of sin,—an influence which shall tend to stay the flood of intemperance, and restrain the spirit of war and bloodshed. Be it ours to wipe the widow's tears, to soothe the orphan's grief, and to relieve the wants and woes of suffering humanity wherever found.

To his Excellency the Governor, permit me respectfully to present the salutations customary on an occasion like this. It is pleasant to welcome anew to the chair of state, one who has so long filled it with such distinguished ability, and so manifestly to the high satisfaction of the citizens of this Commonwealth, and one, too, whose long-tried fidelity in public life, and whose consistent moral and Christian character, may justly be regarded as a sure pledge, that, in ruling over men, he will be "just, ruling in the fear of God." Long may your Excellency continue to enjoy the confidence and esteem of your fellow-citizens. Long may your services be continued in some one of the elevated places of the state or nation. And long, too, may your energies be exerted and your influence felt, as heretofore, for the suppression of vice and immorality, and for the promotion of virtue; in the liberation of the suicidal slaves of appetite from their voluntary bondage, and in the general advancement of the best interests of man. And at the end of a long and useful life, may your sun set on a cloudless sky, and your memory be blessed.

His Honor the Lieutenant Governor, the Honorable Council and Senate, and the assembled Repre-

sentatives of the people, will please accept respectful salutations. Having, in accordance with long-established custom, come up to this house, to bow before God and seek His aid, may not your fellow-citizens regard this as a pledge, publicly given to them and to the world, that, to the extent of your ability, the principles of justice shall be maintained, in the "fear of God." Being confident that, in your hands, the interests of the Commonwealth are safe, you are now affectionately commended to the guardian care and guidance of Him to whom rulers and subjects are alike accountable. In humble dependence on Him may all your official acts be performed, and may all your deliberations be marked by that Christian courtesy and candor which become the rulers and legislators of a Christian State. May your influence be such as shall tend to perpetuate and improve all our free institutions. And when you and I shall have passed away, and others, from generation to generation, shall come up to this house as we now do, may they be in possession of the same rich blessings, and have the same glorious hopes which are now ours.











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